



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900

Boston, MA 02114-2119

Mitt Romney
GOVERNOR

Kerry Healey
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Stephen R. Pritchard
SECRETARY

Tel: (617) 626-1000
Fax: (617) 626-1181
<http://www.mass.gov/envir>

**For Immediate Release
March 8, 2006**

**Contacts: Vanessa Gulati
617-626-1119**

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS SECRETARY TELLS LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE 'THINK THEN ACT' ON FUTURE OF OUTER BREWSTER

Executive Office of Environmental Affairs Secretary, Stephen R. Pritchard, today spoke before the Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets at the State House regarding H. 4500, An Act Authorizing The Leasing Of Certain Real Property Known as Outer Brewster Island. Secretary Pritchard encouraged members of the committee to think about consequences before acting on the legislation determining the future of Outer Brewster Island National Park.

This Island is both a state and national park. In 1970, the Massachusetts Legislature authorized the Department of Conservation and Recreation's predecessor to acquire Outer Brewster for conservation and recreation purposes. The property along with the remaining 6 harbor islands are now managed by DCR. House Bill 4500, sponsored by Representative Brian Dempsey would authorize the leasing of the Outer Brewster Island.

Secretary Pritchard in his statement addressed several concerns he has regarding the language of the bill. These include the number of years the land would be leased for, the review process, the environmental impacts and the consistency of the legislation with federal policy.

The bill affirms the public and commonwealth have certain rights including "fishing, fowling and navigation and that the property is used as parkland" however, the bill goes on to say the "rights of the public and commonwealth in the property are here by relinquished" for 99 years. These are conflicting statements and this lease is longer than any other state lease entered into by DCR.

Another concern is the language of the bill circumvents the standard Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) review process. Although the Federal Environmental

-more-

Review Commission would review the development plans this review would occur after DCR had already relinquished all property rights. This would not allow for MEPA's public comments and review on development plans

The Secretary finally discussed his concern about whether the language of the bill is consistent with Federal regulations. A letter dated November 18, 2005 from the National Park Service advised that "that removing land from park use for an industrial facility is inconsistent with legislative and policy mandates for managing the Boston Harbor Island".

###